

What's New in Our Quest for Diversity? — How Your Interest Group Can Help

by Elizabeth A. Carter, CPCU, AIS, AIT



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Diversity has been an ongoing focus of the CPCU Society, and I am honored and excited to update you on the accomplishments of the committee and the future activities that we are planning.

Accomplishments 2009–2010

- **June 2009** — The Diversity Committee prepared and analyzed survey results from a questionnaire distributed by the Society to chapter leaders. The questions pertained to their awareness of the committee and its efforts. The survey requested information about the chapters' diversity activities. The results were reported in the October/November edition of *CPCU News* and then became the basis of a webinar that we presented in June 2010.
- **August 2009** — At the Annual Meeting and Seminars in Denver, the Society deemed Aug. 31, 2009, "Diversity Day." The morning began with the General Session, which was titled, "The Faces of Change — Individual Stories of Achievement." Panelists shared their stories of change, challenge and growth, and explained how their experiences shaped their personal and professional lives. My

co-chair, **Martin Alpert, CPCU, J.D.**, and I moderated the session. In the afternoon, the Kaleidoscope Group presented a diversity seminar entitled, "Developing Internal Capability." The evening closed with the fifth annual Diversity Reception, which was graciously sponsored by Chartis Insurance Company, the premier sponsor, and Erie Insurance Company and Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal, LLC, the partner sponsors.

- **August 2009** — The Diversity Committee recommended that the Society add a diversity section to the Circle of Excellence (COE) criteria to support the Society's strategic goal of attracting a stream of diverse new talent through CPCU-focused programs. The recommendation was approved. Sections 2A1 and 2C of the 2010–2011 COE program now describe activities that chapters can complete to earn points towards bronze, silver or gold COE recognition.

- **June 2010** — The Society and the Diversity Committee co-sponsored a successful webinar entitled, "Chapter Panel Discussion — Ideas for Promoting the Society's Diversity Goals." Representatives of four chapters participated as panelists and shared the diversity efforts that their chapters had undertaken. Registration was free and was open to chapter leaders throughout the country. We welcome you to visit the Diversity Committee's Web page on the Society's website to view the slides from the presentation.

- **July 2010** — The Diversity Committee held its second annual Diversity Essay Contest. The topic of the contest was: "What specific solutions can you offer to address the substantial challenges that the CPCU Society and our industry face in recruiting and maintaining a diverse membership?" We recently chose and notified the winners of this year's contest. The winning essays are available on the Diversity Committee's Web page. The committee will review the recommendations from all the submissions and utilize them for future

strategic initiatives.

- **September 2010** — At the Annual Meeting and Seminars in Orlando, we recognized the winners of our second annual Diversity Essay Contest at the Diversity Reception. Continuing our efforts to expand our reach, the committee participated in the New Designee Open House, which gave our committee an opportunity to recognize the achievements of the Class of 2010 and meet many of its members.
- **Ongoing Activities** — The committee continues to enhance the Diversity Committee Web page on the Society's website. The Web page was launched in late 2008. We have added information to all of our "Resource" categories, including a list of chief diversity officers, a business case template for chapters to use if they are considering sponsoring a student to an Annual Meeting, updated Society statistics and CPCU student demographic statistics provided by The Institutes, a list of events held during the year, and the *Opportunity Rocks* brochure, which was spearheaded by then CPCU Society President and Chairman **Marvin Kelly, CPCU, MBA**, in 2009.

Future Events

There is so much the committee wants to do that it is always challenging to choose and prioritize future events. The committee spends a substantial amount of time planning, organizing and executing its activities. The committee met in Orlando during the recent Annual Meeting and Seminars and continued discussions and planning for the 2010–2011 year, which will include topics such as:

- Reaching out to champions, interest groups and governors.
- Considering using social media to help spread the word about the Society's diversity activities.
- Preparing for our third annual Diversity Essay Contest.

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- Considering the presentation of another webinar and/or another vehicle that allows chapters to share ideas about successful diversity efforts with each other.
- Leveraging the recommendations from the essay contest entries on ways to recruit and maintain a more diverse membership.
- Having committee members meet and speak to affiliation groups such as colleges, chapters and other professional organizations.

How Your Interest Group Can Help

When I think about how the Diversity Committee defines "diversity" as "respecting and appreciating each person's uniqueness," I realize that our claim partners do that every day. Anyone can have a claim. Accidents and natural disasters do not target a specific race, background, socio-

economic status or religious belief. As claim professionals, you promote diversity daily when working with your customers and peers by showing care and concern equally. I encourage you to continue that practice and to leverage those skills and extend that care to new employees on your teams, your new chapter and interest group members, and new designees.

Please visit our Web page, save the link as a favorite, and utilize the tools and information. Also, please participate in our onsite events, such as the annual Diversity Reception at each Annual Meeting and Seminars, and our online events, such as our webinars and contests. We need your help to increase the diversity of the CPCU Society's membership, and we need your participation in spreading the word and encouraging change.

THANK YOU for what you do and what you will do in the future! ■